



CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2017

Bowling Green, Virginia

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**The Society will meet at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 23, 2017, at the
Kilwinning Crosse Masonic Lodge located at 102 Chase Street,
Bowling Green, Virginia 22427**

The Caroline Historical Society will have its quarterly membership meeting on October 22, 2017, with a program on the “Early Days of Caroline County” presented by Herbert R. Collins. Please bring a friend and enjoy the program, refreshments, and fellowship.

Message from the President

The Caroline Historical Society (CHS) continues with its participation in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II through exhibits and events. Recent celebration events included a visit in Bowling Green on September 21 and 22 by the Virginia State History Mobile with World War I and World War II exhibits. Approximately 300 7th grade students from the Caroline County school system viewed the CHS displays on September 22 after visiting the History Mobile. On September 23, Caroline County and the town of Bowling Green sponsored a very successful (sold out) Big Band USO Dance at town hall. Other World War I and World War II related events will be planned with the county and towns over next year that will involve our organization. Updates will be forthcoming as event dates are firmly established.

Update on Social Media

CHS’s new FACEBOOK page is working well and we have received many positive comments from the information, pictures, and schedule of events posted on a regular basis. At our recent board of directors’ meeting, a motion was passed by the board to proceed with launching a Caroline Historical Society Web site on a trial basis for a year. The new Web site should be up and running before the end of October of this year. By utilizing both FACEBOOK and our new Web site, CHS can further promote our organization through use of event photos, articles, announcements, schedules for events, and contact information. If you are on social media, please “like” us and get your friends to like us as well. This is a good way to keep up with CHS activities and events. CHS officers and board members welcome suggestions or comments that might improve our organization.

Annual Dues

As a reminder, please pay your annual membership dues, if you have not already paid. The dues for a regular (individual) membership are \$15.00 for the year and \$20.00 a year for a family membership. Life membership is a one-time cost of \$200.00. Please consider investing in a life membership. A CHS membership would make a great gift. Checks may be made out to “Caroline

Historical Society” and mailed to Caroline Historical Society, PO Box 324, Bowling Green, VA 22427-0324.

Welcome New Members

Niki Booker, Bowling Green, VA; Lei and Susan Hillier, Goochland County, VA; and Gary Haynes, Caroline County, VA.

Recent Donations to the Caroline Historical Society

New Power Point Multimedia Projector—Tim and Noreen Terrell

Two (2) Postcard Books by Tim O’Gorman—Tim and Noreen Terrell

Large Original Antique Portrait of Caroline Resident—Bill and Hellen Butler

Collection of 1940s Caroline High School Memorabilia—Herbert R. Collins

Tim O’Gorman

At our January 2017 CHS membership meeting, it was our pleasure to have author Tim O’Gorman for our program. I am sorry to report that Tim recently passed away unexpectedly and our heartfelt condolences go out to his family. His books on postcards of old restaurants and motels along Routes 1 and 301 are well known throughout Virginia. His books will continue to preserve a period of history slowly disappearing.

October’s Guest Speaker



Our program for the October membership meeting is entitled “Early Days of Caroline County” and will be presented by local historian Herbert Ridgeway Collins.

Mr. Collins was born in Caroline County, Virginia, on August 29, 1932, and is well known for his expertise on local history and genealogy. He grew up on the family farm of “Green Falls,” which he still owns today. “Green Falls,” built around 1711, has been completely restored and is on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Virginia Landmarks Register. Herb acquired his love for history at an early age and wrote his first book when he was 22 years old. Since that first book, he has written 25 more relating mainly to Caroline County history. Herb is a veteran, having served 6 years in the U.S. Army. His professional career was spent mainly working at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where he served as Curator of Political History, Executive Director of American History, and retired with the title Historian and Smithsonian Curator “EMERITUS.” Over the years, Herb has generously given back to his community, especially to such organizations as the Caroline Library, Inc., Historic Port Royal, and the Caroline Historical Society. Several years ago, Herb was honored by the Virginia State Legislature in the form of a resolution thanking him for his many contributions to preserving and promoting Caroline County history. In addition

to his many accomplishments, Herb holds memberships with the Arlington County Historical Society, Virginia Historical Society, Virginia Genealogy Society (past president), Historic Port Royal, Inc., and the Caroline Historical Society, Inc.

Most citizens of Caroline County do not realize the value of Herb's generous contributions over the years in promoting and preserving the local history of our county.

Herb, thank you for your life-long dedication to keeping the past alive for the future

Kirkwood Post Office

Ralph Fall's 1989 book, "People, Postoffices and Communities in Caroline County, Virginia, 1727-1969" states there were a hundred post offices in Caroline County over the years. It stated Kirkwood Post Office existed from July 5, 1860, until July 9, 1866, (during the years of the Civil War) and no other reference to the post office, the location, or a community so named had been found. The book did report that Walter F. Chapman served as the postmaster from July 5, 1860, until James W. Blanton became postmaster on October 27, 1860, (this information came from the U.S. Post Office Department).

When looking at past deeds on a 106-acre tract of land near Collins Pond that I purchased 40 years ago, I noted this land had been purchased by Charles C. Blanton for James W. Blanton and his wife, Emiline, in 1872 per Deed Book (DB) 54, page 633. The Kirkwood Post Office was likely not on this 106-acre tract as Kirkwood Post Office was closed in 1866 before the Blantons and their children moved here in 1872. The mystery of where Kirkwood Post Office was located intrigued me, thus the research began.

Emiline Blanton (1822-1909), wife of Capt. James Blanton, was buried in the Mount Hermon Baptist Church cemetery, which was located on the road between Shumansville and Bagby and these two post offices were not opened until 1877 and 1883, after Kirkwood closed (Herbert Collins' books on cemeteries).

The Civil War period leads to the book by Robert Krick: "30th Virginia Infantry" had nine companies which included the Sparta Grays, Caroline Grays, and Bowling Green Guards. The book listed eleven or more members from Kirkwood in Caroline County. One was Thomas Walter Green buried at Mount Hermon Baptist Church and another, William B. Kidd, was buried at Salem Baptist Church at Sparta. Another, Thomas Conduit, sold his part in the Silas Conduit estate (DB 52, page 365) which joined the 106-acre Blanton tract mentioned above.

The "Census 1860 Kirkwood, Caroline Co Va." did show 210 people listed at Kirkwood on Sheets 667 through 673 in August 1860 and all the young men shown in the "30th Virginia Infantry" were listed. The census also showed the first postmaster, Walter F. Chapman, was a 26-year-old merchant, which makes sense as most post offices were in country stores. The census taker enumerates the people as he passes from house to house. Therefore it indicated that James Blanton, Silas Gouldin, William Wharton, and Thomas R. Dew were neighbors. The 1850 Census, taken before Kirkwood Post Office opened, showed the same people being 10 years younger in 1850. James W. Blanton was listed as a gunsmith. Thomas R. Dew was wealthy and became the first superintendent of schools in 1870. The Caroline County map made by Confederate engineers

during the Civil War shows the communities, roads, and dots with the last name of the family living at these dots. Many of the names listed in the Collins Pond, Shumansville, and Bagby triangle were names in the “30th Virginia Infantry” book and names in the 1860 Kirkwood census. The name “Blanton” was shown on the map on the south side of the road from Shumansville to Bagby with the names of neighbors Gouldin, Wharton, and Dew.

An abandoned public road ran from Sparta, by Collins Pond, through the Conduit estate land, across Tanyard Swamp on the south, and intersected the road from Shumansville to Bagby near the Barlow farm. Intersections were usually where country stores were located to get customers coming from several directions.

About 15 years ago before my friend, Joe Barlow, passed away, he told me his ancestors who lived on his farm told him Union troops camped out by the store on the Mattaponi Trail at the corner of his property located near Mt. Hermon Church.

I traced the deeds back on properties in the general area. Joe Barlow bought his 101-acre farm from family in 1951 and six deeds back, I found that James W. Blanton and his wife, Emiline, sold the property to Francis Boyington in 1871 as recorded in DB 54, page 395. The deeds also showed Blanton bought this property from John and William Seal in 1850–1852. Thus, Kirkwood Post Office was located on the 101-acre Barlow farm.

It was very significant Kirkwood was the first post office to bring postal service to this large area of the county in 1860. The existing post offices in 1860 were located over 10 miles away in Bowling Green to the northwest, Sparta to the northeast, and Penola to the west. Ten miles was a good distance to travel by horse or mule. There was no delivery of mail, so people had to go to their post office to pickup their mail. People did not receive much mail. There were no bills from the telephone, electrical power, internet provider, or fuel oil companies, or mail from the IRS, Social Security, or junk mail.

During the Civil War, the post offices could no longer purchase stamps from the U.S. Post Office Department. The postmasters stamped the letters being mailed to indicate the postage had been paid until the South began to print postage stamps. The person who delivered mail between post offices also had to be paid for his service as they were no longer on the U.S. Post Office Department payroll.

Remember that “Reconstruction” policy was established to punish Southern states after the Civil War. After President Lincoln was assassinated, President Andrew Johnson from Tennessee insured that Tennessee was no longer kept under Reconstruction, but Mississippi and Virginia were punished the longest and were kept under Reconstruction for five years. Confederate military officers were moved from positions of authority. Could it have been that Confederate Captain James W. Blanton could no longer serve as a postmaster in the U.S. Post Office Department? Maybe the country store was no longer a feasible economic venture and was closed? Why did the Kirkwood Post Office close and why was it called Kirkwood? I found no people in the area named Kirk. “The Kirk” was associated with the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

After Kirkwood Post Office was closed in 1866, there were no post offices on the road south from Bowling Green, on the Mattaponi Trail by DeJarnette, Kidds Fork, Shumansville, Bagby, and Gether to the King and Queen County line until the Shumansville Post Office was opened 11 years later in 1877. Post offices were opened at all these four other places later.—*Bernard Collins*

Flashback in Time

On July 20, 1977, the *Caroline Progress* ran a story on Herb Collin's book entitled "Americans Remember the Home Front" which described his childhood experiences during World War II. Below are several paragraphs reproduced from his book and the newspaper article.

"I was in the 4th grade in 1942, and we would all buy war bonds and war stamps to support the cause. When you filled out a 25-cent defense stamp album, you'd turn it in and get a \$25 war bond. I think it cost \$18.75 at the time I bought it. The school bus driver would take orders from the children who wanted to buy war savings stamps, then go to the post office up in Bowling Green, get our stamps, and bring them back to us the next day. He did that to encourage the school children to buy war savings stamps.

"Then there were the war ration books. You had all kinds of rationing—meat, sugar, gasoline. I remember going down to my great aunt's and she would say: 'You should bring us a sugar stamp.' It was very embarrassing to visit more than once or twice and not take a sugar stamp. I also remember going into restaurants, and they'd have a sign up that said, 'Use little sugar and stir like hell. We don't mind the noise.'

"I remember the USO clubs at Bowling Green. They were segregated at the time; the black USO club was down by the black high school, and the white USO club was up in Bowling Green, the county seat. Many of the old maids at home who went to these USO clubs met service guys and married them. On weekends the troops completely took over Bowling Green. There were no bars, but restaurants served beer. Here was a little town with five hundred people, and you couldn't get your car through the streets; both sides of the street were just lined with Army trucks and Jeeps and all kinds of Army vehicles. Even tanks would be driven in, so that you felt like you were in the middle of warfare. This really made an impression on me."—*Herbert Ridgeway Collins*

Caroline Historical Society Holds Open House and Supports Fall Events

Caroline Historical Society (CHS) members and local residents poured into the Sidney King Arts Center for the July CHS membership meeting to view the CHS's World Wars I and II exhibits. Of special interest was the alcove of photos of men and women who served in World War II from Caroline County. Approximately 460 individual military photos were printed from wooden blocks or "cuts" that were used by the *Caroline Progress* during the World War II years. Wayne Brooks, CHS president, and Gary Billingsley of Billingsley Printing in Fredericksburg worked two weeks to print and organize these photos for display.

Visitors gathered in the large Sidney King Arts Center meeting room to share stories of their experiences in the armed forces and to honor two World War II veterans who were guests at the open house.

James Farmer and David Garrett, both World War II Navy veterans, were recognized for their service to our country. President Brooks gave each an authentic World War II "ruptured duck" veteran pin. Bernard Collins, who lives in Ideal, Virginia, in Caroline County, remembered the war years. He spoke of Jimmy Farmer's experiences in both the European and Pacific Theaters of Operation. Questions were asked and there was much discussion.



Herbert R. Collins talks with World War II Navy veteran David Garrett.



Bernard Collins talks with local World War II Navy veteran Jimmy Farmer.

Another visitor was Robert (Ned) Mitchell, an alumnus and teacher from Caroline High School who now lives in Bahrain where he continues to work in education. His sister, a retired Chesterfield County administrator, Brenda Mitchell, accompanied him. They enjoyed talking with fellow graduates from the Caroline schools who were also in attendance.

Refreshments were served. Folks viewed the Civil War murals of Sidney King and spent time looking at the historical society's World Wars I and II exhibits. The displays covered Caroline's participation during the wars by showing "home-front" photos and memorabilia, vintage photos of World War I aviation contributed by Kathy Burchell and taken by her uncle, manikins dressed in authentic uniforms, posters, and display cases filled with items used by our military during the 1940s.

The Caroline Historical Society supported and contributed to Veterans Day activities on the bowling green in May and assisted the town by placing World War II alcove photos and memorabilia in the town hall for the Fredericksburg Big Band USO Concert and Dance in the latter part of September.

The Caroline Historical Society looks forward to future months as it continues to honor Caroline Veterans. Remember the historical society exhibits and the Sidney King Arts Center are open Thursday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Come and view "Bowling Green through the War Years: WW I & II" exhibits at the King Arts Center.—*Dale Brittle, CHS Historian*

Dates to Remember

Thursdays – Saturdays – 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. – CHS & Sidney King Arts Center open
October 21, 2017 – Bowling Green Harvest Festival, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
January 28, 2018 – CHS Annual Meeting, 3:00 p.m., Kilwinning Masonic Lodge